refurbish and re-equip the Admiral Gorshkov, a Soviet-era aircraft carrier and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether Government's attention had been drawn to the statement made by Pavel Felgenhauer, a leading Russian Defence analyst to that effect the Gorshkov is suitable only as a helicopter carrier have never been tested in a conventional aircrafts; and

(c) if so, Government's reaction in regard thereto and what are the conditions laid down by the Russian Government for the said offer?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) No, Sir. However, a contract for import of T-90S tanks and for the Transfer to Technology (TOT) for indigenous construction of these tanks was signed in February, 2001. In addition, an agreement for the licensed production of SU-30MKI aircraft in India was signed in December, 2000. No contract for warships has been signed with Russia during the last three years.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) The Government of the Russian federation have offered to gift the aircraft carrier "Admiral Gorshkov' to India. The Detailed Project Document (DPD) has been prepared by the Russian Side. An investment decision on the acquisition of "Admiral Gorshkov' has not yet been taken.

Scientific disposal of military hospitals waste

516. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to implement the World Health Organisation's recommendations on scientific disposal of hospital waste in all Military Hospitals;

(b) the number of Military Hospitals in the country and number of hospitals in which these recommendations would be implemented during the current yar; and

(c) the other details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI JASWANT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir,

(b) There are 127 military hospitals in the country. During current year the

implementation of the recommendations of the World Health Organisation will be completed in 98 hospitals.

(c) The process is continuing in remaining hospitals and will be completed by 2002-2003.

Fire in Army ammunition depot at Birdhwal

517. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO:
SHRI NANA DESHMUKH:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether a devastating fire broke out in army ammunition depot at Birdhwal near Suratgarh in Rajasthan;

(b) whether any human lives were lost in the fire;

(c) the estimates of losses in terms of equipment and ammunition suffered in the fire;

(d) whether any enquiry has been ordered into the causes of fire;

(e) if so, the conclusion of the enquiry; and

(f) the steps taken to ensure that such accidental fires do not recur?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI KRISHNAM RAJU): (a) yes Sir.

(b) Yes Sir. One sepoy died.

(c) The estimate of loss of equipment/ammunitions destroyed due to fire is Rs. 3.78 Crores approximately.

(d) Yes, Sir,

(e) The cause of fire can only be known after completion of Court of Inquiry which is still in progress.

(f) The following steps have been taken to prevent occurrence of such fires in future:—

(i) All depots have been directed to update safety and security instructions.

(ii) All depots have been inspected by a Board of Officers to check adequacy of their safety and security arrangements.